

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news plus a full page from Willach.

PATY finalists

THE Pharmacy Assistant National Conference 2021 may be postponed until Oct 2022 (PD 19 Aug), but the Pharmacy Guild of Australia/Maxigesic Pharmacy Assistant of the Year (PATY) competition is continuing.

While the full list of finalists are yet to be confirmed, Erindale Pharmacy's Meryl Banerjee has taken the ACT title, with Lauren Marks of Coopers Pharmacy Taree, claiming the NSW award, Emma Tewes of Kingaroy Good Price Discount Warehouse winning the Queensland crown, and the Victorian award going to Discount Chemist Outlet Centro Somerville's Janelle Crockford.

Patients back pharmacy to do more

CLOSE to two-thirds of Australians want to see pharmacists authorised to provide a broader range of health services including renewing prescriptions for ongoing treatment, the NAB Pharmacy Survey 2021 reveals.

The report noted that "compared to several other countries, pharmacists in Australia are more limited in terms of the services they can provide", however, a majority of respondents felt the profession should be empowered to do more.

"Most [consumers] believe pharmacists should be authorised to provide emergency dispensing of medicines (67%) and ongoing dispensing of oral contraceptive pills (66%)," the authors said.

"Around six-in-10 also think they should be able to renew prescriptions for ongoing treatment (62%), manage common conditions such as back pain and eczema (61%), view patient health records to ensure safe and effective use of medicines (60%), prescribe and administer



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appropriate travel health vaccines and medicines (60%), and diagnose and prescribe for minor ailments and illnesses (55%).

"Australians were in lowest agreement for authorising pharmacists to diagnose and prescribe medicines for more complex or serious ailments and illnesses (19%)."

When responses were broken down by age group, the desire for pharmacists to be allowed to provide prescription medications in emergency situations was highest among the over 65s (82%), while South Australians (79%) were the most supportive of the measure on a state-by-state basis.

Meanwhile, more than half of respondents said they would be prepared to pay to have an influenza vaccine administered in a community pharmacy, with 71% of Tasmanians backing such services.

A further 48% reported that they would be willing to accept out-of-pocket costs to receive travel health



services including vaccination and advice from their local pharmacist, with 51% of female respondents supportive of pharmacists playing a greater role in this area.

Close to 40% of respondents said they would be willing to pay for pharmacy-based health programs related to smoking cessation, sleep apnoea, asthma management, and nutrition, while a similar proportion backed the profession to provide patient-funded wound management, health screening and minor ailment services.

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DoH makes Indigenous COVAX push

PHARMACISTS and other COVID-19 vaccination (COVAX) providers are being urged to “reach out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” in their communities to boost vaccine uptake.

In an open letter to immunisers, Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, Professor Paul Kelly, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation CEO, Pat Turner, and National COVAX Taskforce Coordinator, Lieutenant General John Frewen, thanked them for their efforts to date and asked them to continue to support vaccine uptake in their communities.

“The primary care sector continues to play an enormous role in ensuring Indigenous Australians have access to COVAX and ongoing support and information about the virus,” they said.

“You will now be aware of the advice provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) accepted by the Australian Government which recommended Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 12-15 years be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination from 09 Aug.



“This means all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 12 years and over are now eligible for a COVAX.”

The letter noted that as of 16 Aug, approximately 29.7% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 16 years and older had received at least one dose of a COVAX - significantly below the 48.8% of the non-Indigenous population.

“We all have an important role to play in providing culturally safe vaccination services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” they said.

“For all Indigenous Australians to be vaccinated and bridge the current gap, we are asking the

whole primary care sector to work together and ensure there is equitable COVID-19 vaccine uptake across Australia.

“We appreciate your ongoing support and commitment to vaccinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians as a priority cohort.

“We encourage you to continue to proactively engage with your Indigenous patients.”

Speaking during a Pharmacy Guild of Australia COVAX webinar last week, Frewen raised concerns about the risks of vaccine misinformation being spread in Indigenous communities, and warned “once it’s in the community its nigh on impossible to shake”.



Dispensary Corner


CONSPIRACY theorists are at it again, with C-list celebrities (a potentially generous description) pushing misguided information and suggesting the mainstream media is in league with the Federal Government to hush anti-lockdown/vaccine protests.

The latest “personality” to promote such ideas is one-time *Neighbours* actor-turned podcast host, Nicola Charles, who claims reporters had been “served orders that if they attend protests... they will be arrested and jailed for five years”, and suggested Australia had “become China”, in a tweet.

If true the *Pharmacy Daily* team is feeling somewhat left out, having received no such correspondence from Canberra or anywhere else, but thankfully we’re in good company, with Network Ten’s National Affairs Editor, Hugh Riminton, confirming “this story is bollocks”.


Replying to Riminton’s fact-check, Charles suggested the respected presenter did not “support the freedoms of Australians”, and implied the COVID-19 pandemic was a highly orchestrated hoax.





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Azide impurity

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is investigating contamination of some ‘sartan’ medicines with unacceptable levels of an azide impurity.

Sponsors of the affected medications have told the TGA that “very low levels of this impurity have been detected in batches of losartan and irbesartan products.

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